

THE
MAID OF BATH;
A
COMEDY

IN THREE ACTS:

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL IN THE HAYMARKET:

WRITTEN BY THE LATE

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

AND PUBLISHED BY

Mr. COLMAN.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR W. LOWNDES, AND S. BLADON.

1795.



P R O L O G U E.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mr. FOOTE.

WHO but has read, if you have read at all,
Of one, they *Jack the giant-killer* call?
He was a bold, stout, able-bodied man,
To clear the world of *fee, saw, fum*, his plan:
Whene'er a *monster* had within his power
A young and tender *virgin* to devour,
To cool his blood, *Jack*, like a skilful surgeon,
Bled well the *monster*, and releas'd the *virgin*;
Like the best doctors, did a method learn,
Of curing fevers never to return.

Mayn't I this *giant-killing* trade renew?
I have my *virgin* and my *monster* too.
Tho' I can't boast, like *Jack*, a list of slain,
I wield a lancet and can breathe a vein;
To his Herculean arm my nerves are weak,
He cleft his foes, I only make mine squeak:
As Indians wound their slaves to please the court,
I'll tickle mine, *Great Sirs*, to make you sport.

To prove myself an humble imitator,
Giants are *vices*, and *Jack* stands for *satire*;
By tropes and figures, as it fancy suits,
Passions rise *monsters*, men sink down to brutes;
All talk and write in allegoric diction,
Court, city, town, and country run to fiction!
Each daily paper allegory teaches——
Placemen are *locusts*, and *contractors* *leeches*;
Nay, even *Change-alley*, where no bard repairs,
Deals much in fiction to pass off their wares;
For whence the roaring there?—from *bulls* and *bears*!
The gaming fools are *doves*, the *knaves* are *rooks*,
Change-alley bankrupts waddle out *lame ducks*!
But, ladies, blame not you your gaming spouses,
For you, as well as they, have *pigeon-houses*.

To change the figure—formerly I've been,
To straggling follies only *whipper-in*;

By royal bounty raised, I mount the back
 Of my own *hunter*, and I keep the *pack*;
 Tallyho!—a rank old *fox* we now pursue,
 So strong the scent, you'll run him full in view;
 If we can't kill such *brutes* in human shape,
 Let's fright 'em, that your *chickens* may escape;
 Rouse 'em, when o'er their tender prey they're grumbling,
 And rub their gums at least, to mar their mumbling.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR CHRISTOPHER CRIPPLE,	<i>Mr. Woodward.</i>
MR. FLINT,	<i>Mr. Foote.</i>
MAJOR RACKETT,	<i>Mr. Aickin.</i>
BILLY BUTTON,	<i>Mr. Weston.</i>
PETER POULTICE,	<i>Mr. Fearon.</i>
FILLUP,	<i>Mr. Davis.</i>
MYNHEER SOUR-CROUT,	<i>Mr. Castle.</i>
MONS. DE JARSEY,	<i>Mr. Loyd.</i>
JOHN,	<i>Mr. Jacobs.</i>
LADY CATHARINE COLDSTREAM,	<i>Mrs. Fearon.</i>
MRS. LINNET,	<i>Miss Platt.</i>
MISS LINNET,	<i>Mrs. Jewell.</i>
MAID,	<i>Mrs. Weston.</i>
Waiters, &c.	

THE

THE MAID OF BATH.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Bear Inn at Bath.

Enter Fillup:

Fillup.

WHY, John, Roger, Ralph, Harry Buckle!
what a-dickens are become of the lads?
Can't you hire?—Zure, zure, these whelps are
enow to make a man mazed!

Enter several Waiters.

All. Coming, Sir!

Fillup. Coming! ay, zo be Christmas, I think.
Where be't thee gwain, boy? what, I reckon
thee ca't not zee for thy eyes—Here, take the
candle, and light the gentlefolk in.

Enter John.

John. Carry a couple of candles into the
Daphne. *[Exeunt Waiters.]*

Fillup. John, who is it be a come?

B 2

John.

John. Major Rackett, in a chay and four, from the Devizes.

Fillup. What, the young youth that last zeason carried away wi' un Mrs. Muzleneses 'prentice?

John. Miss Patty Prim, from the Grove?

Fillup. Ay, zure: Thee dost know her well enow.

John. The same.

Fillup. Zure and zure, then we shall have old doing and by; he is a deadly wild spark, thee dost know.

John. But as good a customer as comes to the Bear.

Fillup. That's zure enough: Then why dost not run and light un in? Stay! gee I the candle; I woole go and light un in myzelf. [*Exit.*

Rack. [*without.*] Give the post-boys half a guinea between 'em.

John. Ay, there is some life in this chap! These are your guests that give spirit to Bath: Your paralytical people, that come down to be parboiled and pumped, do no good, that I know, to the town, unless indeed to the physical tribe; How I hate to see an old fellow hobble into the house, with his feet wrapt in flannel, pushing forth his fingers like a cross in the hands to point out the different roads on a common!—Hush!

Enter Rackett and Fillup.

Fillup. I hope, mester, you do zee your way: There be two steps; that you do know. Well, zure, I be heartily glad to zee your honour at Bath.

Rack.

Rack. I thank you, my honest friend Fillup.—
What, have you many people in the town?

Fillup. There ben't a power, please your honour, at present. Some zick folk that do no zort of zarvis, and a few layers that be comed off a the zircuit, that's all.

Rack. Birds of passage, ha, Fillup?

John. True, Sir; for at the beginning of term, when the woodcocks come in, the others fly off.

Rack. Are you there, honest Jack?

John. And happy to see your honour in town.

Rack. Well, master Fillup, and how go you on? any clubs fixed as yet?

Fillup. No, Zir, not to zay fixed; there be parson Pulruddock from the Land's-End, master Evan Thomas, a Welch attorney, two Bristol men, and a few port-drinking people, that dine every day in the Lion; the claret-club ben't expected down till the end of next week.

Rack. Any body in the house that I know?

Fillup. Yes, zure: Behind the bar there be Sir Christopher Cripple, fresh out of a fit of the gout, drinking a drop of punch along wy Mester Peter Poultrice, the potter-carrier on the Parade.

Rack. The Gazettes of the Bath; the very men I want. Give my compliments to the gentlemen, and tell them I should be glad of their company. But, perhaps it may be troublesome for Sir Christopher—

Fillup. No, no, not at all; at present he's a little tender for zure; but I warrant un he'll make a shift to hobble into the room. [Exit

Rack. Well, Jack, and how fares it with you? You have throve, I hope, since I saw you?

John. Throve? no, no, Sir: Your honour
B 3 knows

knows that during the summer, taverns and turnspits have but little to do at Bath.

Rack. True. But what is become of your colleague, honest Ned? I hope he has not quitted his place.

John. The share he had in your honour's intrigue with Miss Prim, soon made this city too hot for poor Ned.

Rack. Then why did not the fool go to London with me? The fellow has humour, spirit, and sings a good song. I intended to have recommended him to one of the theatres.

John. Why, Sir, Ned himself had a bias that way; but his uncle, Alderman Surcingle the fadler, a piece of a Puritan, would not give his consent.

Rack. Why not?

John. He was afraid that kind of life might corrupt or endanger Ned's morals; so has set him up in a bagnio at the end of Long-Acre.

Rack. Nay, if the fellow falls after such a security——

Sir Chr. (without.) At what a rate the rascal is running! Zounds, I believe the fellow thinks I can foot it as fast as Eclipse! Slower, and be——

Enter Sir Christopher Cripple and Fillup, followed by Peter Poultrice.

Where is this rakehelly, rantipole?—Jack, set me a chair.—So, Sir! you must possess a good share of assurance to return to this town, after the tricks you have played.—Fillup, fetch in the punch?—Well, you ungracious young dog, and what is become of the poor wench? Ah, poor Patty! and here too my reputation is ruined as well as the girl's.

Rack. Your reputation? that's a good jest.

Sir Chr.

Sir Chr. Yes, firrah, it is; and all owing to my acquaintance with you: I, forsooth, am called your adviser; as if your own contriving head and profligate heart stood in need of any assistance from me.

Rack. Well, but, dear Sir Kit, how can this idle stuff affect you?

Sir Chr. How? easy enough: I will be judged now by Poultice.—Peter, speak truth! before this here blot in my escutcheon, have not you observed, when I went to either a ball or a break-fasting, how eagerly all the girls gathered round me, gibing, and joking, and giggling? gad take me, as facetious and free as if I were their father!

Poul. Nothing but truth.

Fillup. That's truth, to my zertain knowledge; for I have zeen the women-folk tittering, 'till they were ready to break their zides, when your honour was throwing your double tenders about.

Sir Chr. True, honest Fillup.—Before your cursed affair, neither maid, widow, or wife was ashamed of conversing with me; but now, when I am wheeled into the room, not a soul under seventy will venture within ten yards of my chair: I am shunned worse than a leper in the days of King Lud; an absolute hermit in the midst of a croud! Speak, Fillup, is not this a melancholy truth?

Fillup. Very molycolly, zure!

Sir Chr. But this is not all; the crop-eared curs of the city have taken it into their empty heads to neglect me: Formerly, Mr. Mayor could not devour a custard, but I received a civil card to partake; but now, the rude rascals, in their bushy bobs, brush by me without deigning to bow! in short, I do not believe I have

had a corporation crust in my mouth for these six months: You might as well expect a minister of state at the Mansion-House, as see me at one of their feasts——

Fillup. His honour tells nothing but truth.

Sir Chr. So that I am almost famished, as well as forsaken.

Fillup. Quite famished, as a body may zay, mester.

Sir Chr. Oh, Tom, Tom, you have been a cursed acquaintance to me! what a number of fine turtles and fat haunches of venison has your wickedness lost me!

Rack. My dear Sir Kit, for this I merit your thanks: How often Dr. Carawitchet has told you, rich food and *champaigne* would produce you nothing but poor health and *real* pain?

Sir Chr. What signifies the prattle of such a punning puppy as he? what, I suppose, you would starve me, you scoundrel! When I am got out of one fit, how the devil am I to gather strength to encounter the next? Do you think it is to be done by sipping and sipping? [*drinks*] But no matter! Look you, major Rackett, all between us is now at an end; and, Sir, I should consider it as a particular favour if you would take no further notice of me: I sincerely desire to drop your acquaintance; and, as to myself, I am fixed, positively fixed, to reform.

Rack. Reform? Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Chr. Reform! and why not? Well! you shall see! the whole city shall see! As soon as ever I get to my lodgings, I will send for Luke Lattitat and Codicil, and make a handsome bequest to the hospital.

Rack. Stuff!

Sir Chr. Then I am resolved to be carried every

every day to the twelve o'clock prayers, at the Abby, and regularly twice on a Sunday.

Rack. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Chr. Ha, ha, ha! you may laugh; but I'll be damn'd if I don't! and if all this don't recover my credit, I am determined, besides, to hire a house in Harlequin-Row, and be a constant hearer at the countess's chapel——

Rack. And so, perhaps, turn out a field-preacher in time.

Sir Chr. I don't know but I may.

Rack. Well then, my dear Sir Christopher, adieu! But, if we must part, let us part as friends should; not with dry lips, and in anger. Fillup, take care of the knight. [*Fillup fills the glasses.*] Well, faith, my old crony, I can't say but I am heartily sorry to lose you; many a brave batch have we broached in our time.

Sir Chr. True, Tom, true.

Rack. Don't you remember the bout we had at the Tuns, in the days of Plump Jack? I shall never forget! After you had felled poor Falstaff with a pint bumper of burgundy, how you bestrode the prostrate hero, and in his own manner cried, "Crown me, ye spirits that de-light in gen'rous wine!"

Sir Chr. Vanity, mere vanity, Tom, nothing but vanity!

Rack. And then another day at the—But replenish, Fillup! the bowl is not empty?

Sir Chr. Enough, enough!

Rack. What, don't flinch, man! it is but to finish the bowl.—Come, Sir Christopher, one tender squeeze!

Sir Chr. Take care of my hand! none of your old tricks, you young dog.

Rack.

Rack. Gentle as the lick of a lap-dog; there!—
What o'clock is it, Fillup?

Fillup. I'll tell you, mester [*looks at his watch*].
Just turned a fix.

Rack. So soon? Hang it, Sir Kit, it is too early to part. Come, what say you to one supper more? but one, by way of sacrifice to the sacred feelings of friendship? Honest Fillup knows your taste; he will toss you up a—

Sir Chr. Not a morsel, Tom, if you would give me the universe!

Rack. Pho, man! only a Sandwich or so.—
Fillup, what hast got in the house?

Fillup. A famous John Dorey, two pair of soals, and there be a joint of Landsdown mutton; and then, you do know, my Molly be famous in making marrow-puddens.

Rack. A fine bill of fare.—Come, knight, what do you choose?

Sir Chr. Me! why you seem to have forgot what I told you just now.

Rack. Your design to reform? not at all; and I think you quite right; perfectly so, as I hope to be faved: But what needs all this hurry? to-morrow is a new day; it will then be early enough. Fillup, fend us in just what you will.

Sir Chr. You are a coaxing, cajoling young dog.—Well, if it must be so, Fillup, it must. Fillup, get me an anchovy-toast; and, do you hear? a red herring or two, for my stomach is damnably weak.

Fillup. I shall be zure, zur.

[*Exit.*

Rack. So! that's settled.—Now, Poultrice! Come forward.—Well, my blades, and what news have you got stirring amongst you?

Poul. Except a little run of sore throats about
the

the beginning of autumn, and a few feeble fellows that dropt off with the leaves in October, the town is in tolerable——

Rack. Pox of the dead and the dying! but what amusements have you got for the living?

Poul. There is the new playhouse, you know.

Rack. True: But as to the musical world; what hopes have we there? any of the opera people among you? Apropos—what is become of my little flame, *La petite Rosignole*, the lively little Linnet? is she still——

Sir Chr. Lost, totally lost!

Rack. Lost! what, left you? I am sorry for that.

Sir Chr. Worse, worse!

Rack. I hope she an't dead.

Sir Chr. Ten thousand times worse than all that!

Rack. How the deuce can that be?

Sir Chr. Just going to be buried alive—to be married.

Rack. Pho! is that all? The ceremony was, indeed, formerly looked upon as a kind of metaphorical grave; but the system is changed, and marriage is now considered as an entrance to a new and better kind of life.

Sir Chr. Indeed!

Rack. Pshaw! who talks now of the drudgery of domestic duties, of nuptial chains, and of bonds? mere obsolete words! they did well enough in the dull days of queen Bess; but a modern lass puts on fetters to enjoy the more freedom, and pledges her faith to one, that she may be at liberty to bestow her favours on all.

Sir Chr. What vast improvements are daily made in our morals! what an unfortunate dog am I, to come into the world at least half a century

tury too soon! what would I give to be born twenty years hence! there will be damned fine doings then! hey, Tom? But I'm afraid our poor little girl won't have it in her power to profit by these prodigious improvements.

Rack. Why not?

Sir Chr. Oh, when you once hear the name of her partner——

Rack. Who is it?

Sir Chr. An acquaintance of yours: Only that old fusty, shabby, shuffling, money-loving, water-drinking, mirth-marring, amorous old hunks, master Solomon Flint.

Rack. He that enjoys—owns, I mean—half the farms in the country?

Sir Chr. He, even he.

Rack. Why, he is fixty at least: What a filthy old goat! But then, how does this design suit with his avarice? the girl has no fortune.

Sir Chr. No more than what her talents will give her.

Rack. Why, the poltroon does not mean to profit by them?

Sir Chr. Perhaps, if his family should chance to encrease: But I believe his main motive is the hopes of an heir.

Rack. For which he must be indebted to some of his neighbours: In that point of light, the matter is not so much amiss. It is impossible she can be fond of the fellow; and it is very hard, with the opportunities this place will afford, if, in less than a month, I don't——

Sir Chr. This place! why, you don't suppose he'll trust her here for an hour?

Rack. How!

Sir Chr. Not a moment: The scheme is all settled;

settled; the rumbling 'old family-coach carries her immediately from the church-door to his moated, haunted, old house in the country.

Rack. Indeed!

Sir Chr. Where, besides the Argus himself, she will be watched by no less than two brace of his sisters; four as malicious, musty old maids as ever were soured by solitude, and the neglect of the world.

Rack. A guard not to be corrupted or cozened. Why, Sir Christopher, in a Christian country this must not be suffered. What! a miserable tattered old fellow like him, to monopolize such a tempting creature as her?

Sir Chr. A diabolical plan!

Rack. Besides, the secluding and immuring a girl possessed of her elegant talents, is little better than robbing the world.

Sir Chr. Infamous! worse than a rape! But, where are the means to prevent it?

Rack. Much might be done, if you would lend us your aid.

Sir Chr. Me! of what use can I—And so, you rascal, you want to employ me again as your pimp?

Rack. You take the thing wrong: I only wish you to stand forth, my dear knight; and, like myself, be the protector of innocence, and a true friend to the publick.

Sir Chr. A true friend to the publick! a fine stalking-horse that! But, I fear, like other pretenders, Tom, when your own private purpose is served, the poor publick will be left in the lurch. But, however, the poor girl does deserve to be saved; and if I can do any thing, not inconsistent with my plan of reforming——

Rack.

Rack. That was spoke like yourself. Upon what terms are you and Flint at present?

Sir Chr. Oil and vinegar are scarce so opposite.

Rack. Poultice, you smoke a pipe with him sometimes: Pray, who are your party?

Poul. Mynheer Sour-Crout, Monsieur de Jarsey the port manufacturer, Billy Button the taylor, Master Flint and I, most evenings take a whiff here.

Rack. Are you all in his confidence on this great occasion?

Poul. Upon this case we have had consultations; but Billy button is first in his favour; he likes his prescription the best.

Rack. From this quarter we must begin the attack: Could not we contrive to convene this illustrious senate to-night?

Poul. I should think easily enough.

Rack. But before you meet here?

Poul. Without doubt.

Rack. My dear Poultice, will you undertake the commission?

Poul. I will feel their pulses, to oblige Sir Christopher Cripple.

Sir Chr. But, Peter, dost really think this rash fool is determined?

Poul. I believe, Sir Christopher, he is firmly persuaded, that nothing will allay this uncommon heat in his blood, but swallowing the pill matrimonial.

Rack. We must contrive at least to take off the gilding, and see what effect that will have on his courage. [Exit Poul.]

Sir Chr. Well, Major, unfold! what can you mean by this meeting?

Rack.

Rack. Is it possible you can be at a loss? you who have so long studied mankind?

Sir Chr. Explain.

Rack. Can't you conceive what infinite struggles must have been felt by this fellow, before he could muster up courage to engage in this dreadful perilous state. How often have you heard the proverbial puppy affirm, that marriage was fishing for a single eel among a barrel of snakes! what infinite odds, that you laid hold of the eel! and then a million to one but he slipped through your fingers!

Sir Chr. True, true.

Rack. Can't you, then, guess what will be his feelings and fears when it comes to the push? Do you think publick opinion, his various doubts of himself, and of her, the pride of his family, and the loud claims of avarice (his ruling passion 'till now), won't prove near an equipoise to his love?

Sir Chr. Without doubt.

Rack. At this critical period, won't the concurring advice of all his associates, think you, destroy the balance at once?

Sir Chr. Very probably, Tom, I confess.

Rack. As to our engines, there is no fear of them: Billy Button you have under your thumb; I'll purchase a pipe of port of de Jarsey; and we are sure of old Sour-Crout for a hamper of hock.

Sir Chr. Right, right!—But, after all, what is to become of the girl? Come, Tom, I'll have no foul play shewn to her.

Rack. Her real happiness is part of my project.

Enter Fillup.

Fillup. Here be Mynheer Sour-Crout and Mounseer de Jarsey a come.

Sir Chr.

Sir Chr. We will attend them.—Only think, Tom, what a villain you will be to make me the secret instrument of any more mischief.

Rack. Never fear.

Sir Chr. Particularly, too, now I am fixed to reform.

Rack. It would be criminal in the highest degree.

Sir Chr. Ah, rot your hypocritical face!—I am half afraid, Tom, to trust you; I'll be hanged if you ha'n't some wicked design yourself on the girl! but however, I wash my hands of the guilt.

Rack. My dear knight, don't be so squeamish! But—the gentlemen within!—Stay! who have we here? Ah, my old friend master Button!

Enter Button.

Button. Your worship is welcome to town!—But where is Sir—Oh! I understood as how your honour had sent for me all in a hurry: I should have brought the patterns before, if I had them: the worst of my enemies can't say but Billy Button is punctual. Here they be: I received them to-night by Wiltshire's waggon, that flies in eight days.

Sir Chr. Tomorrow, Billy, will do; take a seat.

Button. I had rather stand.

Sir Chr. I wanted to talk to you upon another affair. What, I suppose, you are very busy at present?

Button. Vast busy, your honour.

Sir Chr. This marriage, I reckon, takes up most of your time.

Button. Your honour?

Rack. Miss Linnet, and your old master Flint, you know.

Button.

Button. Oh, ay! But the squire does not intend to cut a dash till the spring.

Sir Chr. No! nothing has happened, I hope? affairs are all fixed?

Button. As a rock: I am sure, now, it can't fail; because why, I have premtory orders to scour and new-line the coachman and footman's old frocks; and am, besides, to turn the lace, and fresh-button the suit his honour made up twenty years ago comes next Lent, when he was shreif for the county.

Rack. Nay, then it is determined.

Button. Or he would never have gone to such an expence.

Sir Chr. Well, Billy, and what is your private opinion, after all, of this match?

Button. It is not becoming, your honour knows, for a tradesman like me to give his——

Rack. Why not? Don't you think now, Billy, it is a bold undertaking for a man at his time of life?

Button. Why, to be sure, his honour is a little stricken in years, as a body may say; and, take all the care that one can, time will wear the nap from even superfine cloth; stiches tear, and elbows will out, as they say——

Sir Chr. And besides, Bill, the bride's a mere baby.

Button. Little better, your honour: But she is a tight bit of stuff, and I am confident will turn out well in the wearing. I once had some thoughts myself of taking measure of Miss.

Rack. Indeed!

Button. Yes; and, to my thinking, had made a pretty good progress; because why, at church of a Sunday she suffered me to look for the lessons;

C

and

and moreover, many a time and oft have we sung psalms out of the very same book.

Rack. That was going a great way.

Button. Nay, besides, and more than all that, she has at this precious minute of time a pincushion by her side of my own presentation.

Rack. Ay! and how came the treaty broke off?

Button. Why, who should step in in the nick, but the very squire himself?

Sir Chr. I am afraid, Bill, your beauty is a little bit of the jilt.

Button. No, your worship; it is all along with her mother: 'Cause her great aunt, by her father's side, was a clergyman's daughter, she is as pragmatic and proud as the Pope; so, forsooth, nothing will please her for Miss, but a bit of quality binding.

Rack. I knew the refusal could not come from the girl; for, without a compliment, Billy, there is no comparison between you and the—why, you are a pretty, slight, tight, light, nimble—

Button. Yes; very nimble and slight, and we are both of a height: Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Chr. Why, love has made Billy a poet.

Button. No, no; quite accident, as I hope to be kissed.

Rack. And your rival is a fusty, foggy, lumbering log!

Button. For all the world like my goose; plaguy hot and damned heavy, your honour.

Sir Chr. Why, Billy blazes to-day.

Button. And though my purse, mayhap, ben't so heavy as his'n, yet I contrives to pay every body their own.

Rack. I dare say.

Button. Ay; and I have, besides, two houses in Avon-

Avon-Street; and, perhaps, a bit or two of land in a corner.

Sir Chr. Oh, the curmudgeonly rogue!

Button. And, moreover, if madam Linnet talks of families, I would have her to know that I have powerful relations as well as herself: There's Tommy Button, my uncle's own son, that has an employment under the government.

Sir Chr. Ay, Billy! what is it?

Button. At this very time he is an exciseman at Wapping. And, besides, there is my cousin Paul Puff, that kept the great pastrycook's shop in the Strand, now lives at Brentford, and is made a justice of the peace.

Rack. As this is the case, I don't think it will be difficult yet to bring matters to bear.

Sir Chr. If Bill will but follow directions.

Button. I hope your honour never found me deficient.

Sir Chr. We will instruct you further within.—Major Racket, your hand!

Button. Let me help you. Folks may go further and fare worse, as they say: Why, I have some thoughts, if I can call in my debts, to retire into the country, and set up for a gentleman.

Rack. Why not? one meets with a great number of them who were never bred to the business.

Button. I a'n't much of a mechanic at present; I does but just measure and cut.

Rack. No?

Button. I don't think that I have sat cross-legg'd for these six years.

Rack. Indeed?

Button. And who can tell, your honour, in a few years, if I behaves well, but, like cousin Puff, I may get myself put in the commission?

Sir Chr. The worshipful William Button, esquire— it sounds well. I can tell you, Billy, there have been magistrates made of full as bad materials as you. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Mrs. Linnet and Miss Linnet.

Mrs. Linnet.

—**YES**, Kitty, it is in vain to deny it! I am convinced there is some little, low, paltry passion, that lurks in your heart.

Miss Lin. Indeed, my dear mother, you wrong me.

Mrs. Lin. Indeed, my dear Miss, but I don't! what else could induce you to reject the addresses of a lover like this? Ten thousand pounds a year! Gads my life, there is not a lady in town would refuse him, let her rank be ever so——

Miss Lin. Not his fortune, I firmly believe.

Mrs. Lin. Well! and who now-a-days marries any thing else? Would you refuse an estate, because it happened to be a little encumbered? you must consider the man in this case as a kind of a mortgage.

Miss Lin. But, the disproportion of years——

Mrs. Lin. In your favour, child; the incumbrance will be the sooner removed.

Miss Lin. Then, my dear mother, our minds; how very widely they differ! my nature is liberal and frank, though I am but a little removed from mediocrity; his heart, in the very bosom of wealth, is shut to every social sensation.

Mrs. Lin.

Mrs. Lin. And yet, Miss, this heart you have had the good luck to unlock. I hope you don't urge his offers to you as a proof of his passion for money? why, you forget yourself, Kate; who, in the name of wonder, do you think that you are? What, because that you have a baby face, and can bawl a few ballads—

Miss Lin. Nay, madam, you know I was never vain of my talents; if they can procure me a decent support, and in some measure repay my father and you for their kind cultivation—

Mrs. Lin. And how long are you sure your talents, as you call 'em, will serve you? Are a set of features secure against time? wont a single fore throat destroy the boasted power of your pipe? But suppose that should not fail, who can insure you against the whim of the publick? will they always continue their favour?

Miss Lin. Perhaps not.

Mrs. Lin. What must become of you then? Now by this means you are safe, above the reach of ill-fortune. Besides, child, to put your own interest out of the question, have you no tender feelings for us? Consider, my love (you don't want for good nature), your consent to this match will, in the worst of times, secure a firm and able friend to the family.

Miss Lin. You deceive yourself, indeed, my dear mother: He a friend! I dare believe the first proof you will find of his friendship, will be his positive commands to break off all correspondence with every relation I have.

Mrs. Lin. That's a likely story indeed! Well, child, I must set your father to work; I find what little weight my arguments have.

L. Cath. [*without.*] Is Mestrefs Linnet within?

Mrs. Lin. Oh, here comes a protectress of yours, Lady Catharine Coldstream; submit the matter to her: She can have no views, is well read in the ways of the world, and has your interest sincerely at heart.

Enter Lady Catharine Coldstream.

L. Cath. How is aw wi you, Mestress Linnet and Mefs? what a dykens is the matter wi Mefs? she seems got quite i'the dumps: I thought you were aw ready to jump oot o' your skens at the bonny prospec afore you.

Mrs. Lin. Indeed, I wish your ladyship would take Kitty to task; for what I say signifies nothing.

L. Cath. Ah! that's aw wrang! What has been the mater, Mefs Kitty? you ken weel enow that children owe an implecit concession to their parents; it is na for bairns to litigate the wull of their friends.

Mrs. Lin. Especially, my lady, in a case where their own happiness is so nearly concerned: There is no persuading her to accept Mr. Flint's offers.

L. Cath. Gad's mercy, Mefs, how comes aw this about? do na you think you ha drawn a braw ticket in the lottery o' life? do na you ken that the mon is laird of aw the lond in the country?

Miss Lin. Your ladyship knows, madam, that real happiness does not depend upon wealth.

L. Cath. Ah, Mefs, but it is a bonny ingredient. Don't you think, Mestress Linnet, the las has got some other lad in her heed?

Mrs. Lin. Your ladyship joins in judgment
with

with me: I have charged her; but she stoutly denies it.

L. Cath. Mefs, you munna be bashful: An you solecit a cure, your phyfician muft ken the caufe o' your malady.

Miss Lin. Your ladyship may believe me, madam, I have no complaint of that kind.

L. Cath. The lafs is obftinate. Mefstrefs Linnet, cannot yourfel gi a guefs?

Mrs. Lin. I can't fay that I have obferved—Indeed, fome time ago, I was inclined to believe Mr. Button——

L. Cath. What! yon taylor in Stall-Street? Ah, Mrs. Linnet, you are aw oot in your guefs: The lafs is twa weel bred, and twa faunzy to gi her heart to fik a burgis as he: Wully Button? nae, he is nae the lad awaw.

Mrs. Lin. Major Racket, I once thought—but your ladyship knows his affairs took a different turn.

L. Cath. Ah! Racket! that's another man's mater: Laffes are apt enow to fet their hearts upon fcarlet; a cockade has muckle charms wi our fex; yes. Well, Mefs, comes the wind fra that corner?

Miss Lin. Does your ladyship think, to diflike Mr. Flint, it is abfolutely neceffary to have a preposfeffion for somebody elfe?

L. Cath. Mrs. Linnet, an you wull withdraw for a while, perhaps Mefs may throw aff her referve, when there's nobody by but ourfelves; a mother, you ken weel, may prove ane too many fome times.

Mrs. Lin. Your ladyship is moft exceedingly kind.—D'ye hear, Kitty? mind what her ladyship

ship says; do, my dear; and be ruled by your friends; they are older and wiser than you. [*Exit.*]

L. Cath. Well, Mefs, what's the cause of aw this? what makes you so averse to the wull of your friends?

Miss Lin. Your ladyship knows Mr. Flint.

L. Cath. Ay, unco weel.

Miss Lin. Can your ladyship then be at a loss for a cause?

L. Cath. I canna say Mr. Flint is quite an Adonis; but wha is it that in matrimony gets aw they wish? When I entermarried with Sir Launcelot Coldstream, I was e'en sik a sprak lafs as yoursel, and the baronet bordering upon his grand climacteric. You mun ken, Mefs, my father was so unsaunzy as to gang out wi' Charley in the forty-five; after which, his fidelity was rewarded in France by a commission that did na bring him in a bawbee, and a pension that he never was paid.

Miss Lin. Infamous ingratitude!

L. Cath. Ay; but I dinna think they will find ony mair sik fools i' the North.

Miss Lin. I hope not.

L. Cath. After this, you canna think, Mefs, there was mickle filler for we poor bairns that were left; so that, in troth, I was glad to get an establishment; and ne'er heeded the disparity between my guid mon and mysel.

Miss Lin. Your ladyship gave great proofs of your prudence; but my affairs are not altogether so desperate.

L. Cath. Gad's mercy, Mefs! I hope you dinna make any comparison between Lady Catharine Coldstream, wha has the best blood in Scotland that runs in her veins——

Miss

Miss Lin. I hope your ladyship does not suppose——

L. Cath. A lady lineally descended fra the great Ossian himself, and allied to aw the illustrious houses abroad and at home——

Miss Lin. I beg, madam, your ladyship——

L. Cath. And Kitty Linnet, a little play-actor, wha gets applauded or hissed just e'en as the mobility wulls.

Miss Lin. I am extremely concern'd, that——

L. Cath. Look'ye, Mefs, I will cut maters short : You ken weel enow, the first notice that e'er I took of you was on your acting in Allan Ramsay's play of Patie and Roger ; ere sin I hae been your fast friend ; but an you continue obstinate, and will na succumb, I shall straightway withdraw my protection.

Miss Lin. I shall be extremely unhappy in losing your ladyship's favour.

L. Cath. Mefs, that depends entirely on yourself.

Miss Lin. Well, madam, as a proof how highly I rate it, and how desirous I am of obeying the commands of my parents, it sha'n't be my fault if their wishes are not accomplished.

L. Cath. That's aw wright now, Kitty : Gi me a kifs ! you are the prudent lass that I thought you. Love, Mefs, is a pastime for boys and green girls ; aw stuff, fit for nothing but novels and romances ; there is nathing solid, na stability.

Miss Lin. Madam——

L. Cath. But to fix your fortune at once, to get above the power o' the world, that, child, is a serious concern.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lin. [*without.*] With your ladyship's leave——

L. Cath. You may come in, Mrs. Linnet;

Enter Mrs. Linnet.

your daughter is brought to a proper sense of her duty, and is ready to coincide with your wish.

Mrs. Lin. We are infinitely bound to your ladyship! This is lucky, indeed! Mr. Flint is now below, madam, and begs to be admitted.

L. Cath. Ah! the mon comes in the nick: Shew him in, the instant. [*Exit Mrs. Lin.*]
Now, Kitty, is your time! do na be shy, las; but throw out aw your attractions, and fix him that he canna gang back:

Miss Lin. Madam, I hope to behave——

L. Cath. Gad's mercy, how the girl trembles and quakes! Come, pluck up a heart, and consider your aw is at stake.

Miss Lin. I am afraid I shall be hardly able to say a fingle——

L. Cath. Suppose then you sing; gi him a song; there is nothing moves a love-sick loon mair than a song—[*Noise without.*] I hear the lad on the stairs.—But let the words be aw melting and soft: The Scotch tunes, you ken, are unco pathetic; sing him the Birks of Endermay, or the Braes of Balendine, or the——

Enter Flint and Mrs. Linnet.

Maister Flint, your servant! There, Sir, you ken the las of your heart: I have laid for you a pretty solid foundation; but as to the edifice, you must e'en erect it yoursel.

[*Exit.*
Flint.]

Flint. Please your ladyship, I will do my endeavour.—Madam Linnet, I have made bold to bring you a present, a small paper of tea, in my pocket : You will order the tea-kettle on.

Mrs. Lin. Oh, Sir, you need not have——

Flint. I won't put you to any expence.

Exit Mrs. Lin.

Well, Miss ; I understand here by my lady, that she—that is, that you—with respect and regard to the—ah ! ah ! won't you please to be seated ?

[Reaches two chairs.]

Miss Lin. Sir ?—My lover seems as confused as myself.

[Aside.]

Flint. I say, Miss, that as I was a-saying, your friends have spoke to you all how and about it.

Miss Lin. About it ! about what ?

Flint. About this here business that I come about. Pray, Miss, are you fond of the country ?

Miss Lin. Of the country !

Flint. Ay : Because why, I think it is the most prettiest place for your true lovers to live in ; something so rural ! For my part, I can't see what pleasure pretty Misses can take in galloping to plays, and to balls, and such expensive vagaries ; there is ten times more pastime in fetching walks in the fields, in plucking of daisies——

Miss Lin. Haymaking, feeding the poultry, and milking the cows.

Flint. Right, Miss.

Miss Lin. It must be owned they are pretty employments for ladies.

Flint. Yes ; for my mother used to say, who, between ourselves, was a notable housewife,

Fools

Fools that are idle,
May live to bite the bridle.

Miss Lin. What a happiness to have been bred under so prudent a parent !

Flint. Ay, Miss, you will have reason to say so ; her maxims have put many a pound into my pocket.

Miss Lin. How does that concern me ?

Flint. Because why, as the saying is,

Tho' I was the maker,
You may be the partaker.

Miss Lin. Sir, you are very obliging.

Flint. I can tell you, such offers are not every day to be met with : Only think, Miss, to have victuals and drink constantly found you, without cost or care on your side ! especially, now meat is so dear.

Miss Lin. Considerations by no means to be slighted.

Flint. Moreover, that you may live and appear like my wife, I fully intend to keep you a coach.

Miss Lin. Indeed !

Flint. Yes ; and you shall command the horses whenever you please, unless during the harvest, and when they are employed in plowing and carting ; because the main chance must be minded, you know.

Miss Lin. True, true.

Flint. Though I don't think you will be vastly fond of coaching about ; for why, we are off of the turnpike, and the sloughs are deadly deep about we.

Miss

Miss Lin. What, you intend to reside in the country?

Flint. Without doubt; for then, you know, Miss, I shall be sure to have you all to myself.

Miss Lin. An affectionate motive!—But even in this happy state, where the most perfect union prevails, some solitary hours will intrude, and the time, now and then, hang heavy on our hands.

Flint. What, in the country, my dear Miss? not a minute: You will find all pastime and jollity there; for what with minding the dairy, dunning the tenants, preserving and pickling, nursing the children, scolding the servants, mending and making, roasting, boiling, and baking, you won't have a moment to spare; you will be merry and happy as the days they are long.

Miss Lin. I am afraid the days will be hardly long enough to execute so extensive a plan of enjoyment.

Flint. Never you fear! I am told, Miss, that you write an exceeding good hand.

Miss Lin. Pretty well, I believe.

Flint. Then, Miss, there is more pleasure in store; for you may employ any leisure time that you have in being my clerk, as a justice of peace: You shall share sixpence out of every warrant, to buy you any little thing that you want.

Miss Lin. That's finely imagined!—As your enjoyments are chiefly domestic, I presume you have contrived to make home as convenient as can be: You have, Sir, good gardens, no doubt?

Flint. Gardens? ay, ay: Why, before the great parlour window there grows a couple of yews,

yews, as tall as a mast, and as thick as a steeple; and the boughs cast so delightful a shade, that you can't see your hand in any part of the room.

Miss Lin. A most delicate gloom!

Flint. And then there constantly roosts in the trees a curious couple of owls; which I won't suffer our folks to disturb, as they make so rural a noise in the night——

Miss Lin. A most charming duet!

Flint. And besides, Miss, they pay for their lodgings, as they are counted very good mousers, you know.

Miss Lin. True; but within doors, your mansion is capacious, and——

Flint. Capacious? yes, yes; capacious enough: You may stretch your legs without crossing the threshold: Why, we go up and down stairs to every room of the house. To be sure, at present, it is a little out of repair; not that it rains in (where the casements are whole) at above five or six places, at present.

Miss Lin. Your prospects are pleasing!

Flint. From off the top of the leads; for why, I have boarded up most of the windows, in order to save paying the tax. But to my thinking, our bed-chamber, Miss, is the most pleasantest place in the house.

Miss Lin. Oh, Sir, you are very polite.

Flint. No, Miss, it is not for that; but you must know, Miss, that there is a large bow-window facing the East, that does finely for drying of herbs: It is hung round with hatchments of all the folks that have died in the family; and then the pigeon-house is over our heads.

Miss Lin. The pigeon-house?

Flint. Yes; and there, every morning, we shall
be

be waked by day-break with their murmuring, cooing and courting, that will make it as fine as can be.

Miss Lin. Ravishing ! Well, Sir, it must be confessed, you have given me a most bewitching picture of pastoral life : your place is a perfect Arcadia ! But I am afraid half the charms are derived from the painter's flattering pencil.

Flint. Not heightened a bit, as yourself shall be judge. And then, as to company, Miss, you may have plenty of that when you will ; for we have as pretty a neighbourhood as a body can wish.

Miss Lin. Really !

Flint. There is the widow Kilderkin, that keeps the Adam and Eve at the end of the town, quite an agreeable body ! indeed, the death of her husband has drove the poor woman to tittle a bit ; farmer Dobbin's daughters, and Dr. Surplice, our curate, and wife, a vast conversible woman, if she was not altogether so deaf.

Miss Lin. A very sociable set ! Why, Sir, placed in this paradise, there is nothing left you to wish.

Flint. Yes, Miss, but there is.

Miss Lin. Ay ! what can that be ?

Flint. The very same that our grandfather had ; to have a beautiful Eve by my side. Could I lead the lovely Linnet nothing loath to that bower——

Miss Lin. Oh, excess of gallantry !

Flint. Would her sweet breath but deign to kindle, and blow up my hopes !

Miss Lin. Oh, Mr. Flint ! I must not suffer this, for your sake ; a person of your importance and rank——

Flint.

Flint. A young lady, Miss, of your great merit and beauty——

Miss Lin. A gentleman so accomplished and rich——

Flint. Whose perfections are not only the talk of the Bath, but of Bristol, and the whole country round——

Miss Lin. Oh, Mr. Flint, this is too much!

Flint. Her goodness, her grace, her duty, her decency, her wisdom and wit, her shape, slenderness and size, with her lovely black eyes, so elegant, engaging, so modest, so prudent, so pious, and, if I am rightly informed, possessed of a sweet pretty pipe.

Miss Lin. This is such a profusion——

Flint. Permit me, Miss, to solicit a specimen of your delicate talents.

Miss Lin. Why, Sir, as your extravagant compliments have left me nothing to say, I think the best thing I can do is to sing.

S O N G.

The smiling morn, the breathing spring,
Invites the tuneful birds to sing;
And as they warble from each spray,
Love melts the universal lay, &c.

Flint. Enchanting! ravishing sounds! not the Nine Muses themselves, nor Mrs. Baddeley, is equal to you.

Miss Lin. Oh, fy!

Flint. May I flatter myself that the words of that song were directed to me?

Miss Lin. Should I make such a confession, I should ill deserve the character you have been pleased to bestow.

Enter

Enter Lady Catharine Coldstream.

L. Cath. Come, come, Maister Flint, I'll set your hert at rest in the instant: you ken weel enow, lassies are apt to be modest and shy; then take her answer fra me: Prepare the minister, and aw the rest of the tackle, and you will find us ready to gang to the kirk.

Flint. Miss, may I rely on what her ladyship says?

L. Cath. Gad's mercy! I think the mon is bewitched! he wonna take a woman of quality's word for sik a trifling thing as a wife.

Flint. Your ladyship will impute it all to my fears. Then I will straight set about getting the needful.

L. Cath. Gang your gait as fast as you list.

Flint. Lord bless us! I had like to have forgot—I have, please your ladyship, put up here in a purse a few presents, that if Miss would but deign to accept——

L. Cath. Ah! that's aw wright; quite in the order of things: As matters now stand, there is no harm in her accepting of presents fra you, Maister Flint; you may produce.

Flint. Here is a Porto-Bello pocket-piece of Admiral Varnon, with his image a one side, and six men of war only, all in full sail, on the other——

L. Cath. That's a curious medallion!

Flint. And here is a half-crown of Queen Anne's, as fresh as when it came out from the Mint: I have refused two and eight-pence for it a hundred times.

L. Cath. Yes, yes; it is in very fine preservation.

D

Flint.

Flint. In this here paper there are two mourning-rings; that, which my aunt Bother'em left me, might serve very well, I should think, for the approaching happy occasion.

L. Cath. How! a mourning——

Flint. Because why, the motto's so pat;

True, till death
Shall stop my breath.

L. Cath. Ay, ay, that contains mickle morality, Mefs.

Flint. And here is, fourthly, a silver coral and bells, with only a bit broke off the coral when I was cutting my grinders: This was given me by my godfather Slingsby; and I hope will be in use again before the year comes about.

L. Cath. Na doubt, na doubt! Leave that matter to us; I warrant we impede the Flint family from fawing into oblivion.

Flint. I hope so: I should be glad to have a son of my own, if so be, but to leave him my fortune; because why, at present there is no mortal that I care a farthing about.

L. Cath. Quite a philosopher. Then dispatch, Maister Flint, dispatch! for you ken, at your time of life, you hanna a moment to lose.

Flint. True, true. Your ladyship's entirely devoted—Miss, I am your most affectionate slave! [Exit.

L. Cath. A saunzy lad, this Maister Flint: You see, Mefs, he has a meaning in aw he does.

Miss Lin. Might I be permitted to alter your ladyship's words, I should rather say, *meannefs*.

L. Cath. It is na mickle mater what the mon is at present; wi a little management, you may mould him into any form that you list.

Miss

Miss Lin. I am afraid he is not made of such pliant materials : But, however, I have too far advanced to retire ; the die is cast ! I have no chance now, unless my Corydon should happen to alter his mind.

L. Cath. Na, Mefs : there is na danger in that : You may ken the treaty is concluded under my mediation ; an he should dare to draw back, Lady Catharine Coldstream would find means to punish his perfidy.—Come away, Mefs !
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Bear Inn.

Sir Christopher Cripple, Sour-Crout, de Jarsey, Major Rackett, and Poullice, discovered sitting at a table.

Sir Christopher Cripple.

WE must take care that Flint does not surprise us ; for the scoundrel is very suspicious.

Rack. There is no danger of that ; I lodged him safely at Linnet's : Button stands centry at the end of the street ; so that we shall be instantly apprised of every motion he makes.

Poul. Well managed, my Major !

Sir Chr. Yes, yes ; the cunning young dog knows very well what he is about.

Sour-Cr. Upon my vord, Major Rackett has very fine disposition to make a figure at de head of de army ; five or six German campaigns will

—Ah, dat is de best school in de world for make a de var.

Sir Chr. Five or six German campaigns !

Sour-Cr. Ay, Chevalier ; vat you say to dat ?

Sir Chr. O Mynheer ! nothing at all : A German war, for aught I know, may be a very good school ; but it is a damned expensive education for us.

De Jar. C'est vrai, Chevalier ; dat is all true ; ce pay la, dat place is de grave for de Frenchman and de fine English Guinea.

Sir Chr. True, Monsieur ; but our guineas are rather worse off than your men, for they stand no chance of rising again.

De Jar. Ha, ha, ha ! dat is very vell ! le Chevalier have beaucoup d'esprit, great deal of wit, ma foi.

Rack. I think the Knight is in luck. But don't let us lose sight of our subject ! You, Gentlemen, are all prepared, perfect in the several parts you are to play ?

All. Ay, ay.

Rack. You, Mynheer Sour-Crout ?

Sour-Cr. I understand : I will pique his honour ; de pride of his famille.

Rack. Right. Poultrice——

Poul. I will alarm him on the side of his health.

Sir Chr. Next to his money, the thing in the world he most minds.

Rack. You, de Jarfey, and Button, will employ all your eloquence on the prudential side of the—Oh, dear Jarfey ! here is a draft for the pipe of Port that I promised.

De Jar. Dat is right.

Rack. The only receipt to get bawds, boroughs,

roughs, or Frenchmen. [*Aside.*—Oh, here Billy comes.

Enter Button.

Well, Billy! what news?

Button. I am vast afraid all matters are concluded at last.

Rack. Ay! prithee why so?

Button. Because why, in ten minutes after you went, out bolted the Squire, and hurry-scurried away to layer Lattitat's, who, you know, arrests his tenants, and does all his concerns.

Rack. True: Well——

Button. I suppose, to gi' him orders about drawing up the writings.

Sir Chr. Not unlikely. But you think Flint will come to the club?

Button. There is no manner of doubt of it; because why, he holloo'd to me from over the way, "What, Billy, I suppose you are bound to the Bear: Well, boy, I shall be hard at your heels;" and he seemed in prodigious vast spirits.

Rack. I am mistaken if we don't lower them a little. Well, Gentlemen, the time of action draws near. Knight, we must decamp.

Sir Chr. When you will.

Rack. I think, Sir Christopher, you lodge in the same house with the Linnets?

Sir Chr. Just over their heads.

Rack. Then thither we'll go. Ten to one, if our plot operates as I expect, the hero will return to their house.

Sir Chr. Most likely.

Rack. We are come to a crisis, and the catastrophe of our piece can't be very far off.

Sir Chr. I wish, like other plays, it don't end in a marriage.

Rack. Then shall I be most confoundedly bit. But come, Knight!

Sir Chr. Rot you! I do as fast as I can.—I can't think, Rackett, what the deuce makes thee so warm in this business; there is certainly something at the bottom that I don't comprehend. But do, Major, have pity on the poor girl: Upon my soul, she is a sweet little syren! so innocent and——

Rack. Pho, pho! don't be absurd! I thought that matter had been fully explained. This, Knight, is no time to look back; but suppose now I should have a little mischief in hand——

Sir Chr. How! of what kind?

Rack. "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest Knight, till done, and then applaud the deed!"

Sir Chr. It is very extraordinary, Major Rackett, if you are determined to make the devil a visit, that you can't pay it alone; or, if you must have company, what a pox makes you think of fixing on me?

Rack. Hey-day! ha, ha, ha! What, in the vapours again? we must have some more punch.

Sir Chr. You are mistaken; that won't have power to change the state of my mind: My resolves are too firm——

Rack. And who wishes to break them? I only ask your assistance to-night; and your reformation, you recollect, don't begin till to-morrow.

Sir Chr. That's true, indeed: But no human power shall prevail on me to put it off any longer than to-morrow.

Rack.

Rack. Or the next day at furthest.

Sir Chr. May I be damn'd if I do!

[*Exeunt Rack. and Sir Chr.*]

Poul. Come, lads, light your pipes! Which of us shall be first to attack? Billy——

Button. Won't it be rather too bold for me to begin?

Poul. Then let us leave it to chance.—Hush! I hear him lumbering in! compose your looks; let his reception be solemn and grave.

Button. Leave that chair for him.

Enter Flint.

Flint. How fares it, my lads?—Well, boys, matters are settled at last; the little Kate has complied, and to-morrow is fixed for the day.

Poul. You have settled it then?

Flint. As firm as a rock.

Poul. So you can't retreat, if you would?

Flint. Retreat! I have no such design.

Poul. You ha'n't?

Flint. No, to be sure, you great fool! What the deuce would Poullice be at?

Poul. Nay then, neighbours, what we have been saying will just signify nothing.

Flint. Saying! why, you have not heard—that is, nobody——

Poul. No, nothing very material—only—but as the matter is carried so far——

Flint. So far! why, I hope you have not found out any flaw! Kitty has not——

Poul. No, no; nothing of that; no, upon my word! I believe, a very modest, prudent, good girl, neighbours.

All. No manner of doubt.

Flint. Well then? but what a plague is the meaning

meaning of this ? you all sit as silent and glum—why, can't you speak out, with a pox ?

Poul. Why, 'Squire, as we are all your fixed friends, we have been canvassing this matter amongst us.

Flint. You have ?

Poul. Marriage, you know very well, is no trifling affair ; too much caution and care can't be used.

Flint. That I firmly believe, which has made me defer it so long.

Poul. Pray lend me your hand ; how is the state of your health ? do you find yourself hearty and strong ?

Flint. I think so ; that is, I—you ha'n't observed any bad symptoms of late ?

Poul. No ; but you used to have pains flying about you.

Flint. Formerly ; but since I have fixed my gout to a fit, they are gone : that, indeed, lays me up for four or five months in a year.

Poul. A pretty long spell : And, in such a case, now, do you think that marriage——

Flint. The most best receipt in the world : Why, that, man, was one of my motives : Wives, you know, are allowed to make very good nurses.

Poul. That, indeed——

Flint. Ay ; and then they are always at hand ; and, besides, they don't cost one a farthing.

Poul. True, true. Why, you look very jolly, and fresh ; does not he ?

All. Exceedingly.

Poul. Yet he can't be less than—let me see ! Wasn't you under old Syntax at Wells ?

Flint. He died the year I left school.

Poul.

Poul. That must be a good forty years since.

Flint. Come sheep-shearing next.

Poul. Then, 'Squire, you are hard upon sixty.

Flint. Not far away, Master Poullice.

Poul. And Miss Linnet—sixteen : You are a bold man ! Not but there are instances, where men have survived many years such disproportionate marriages as these.

Flint. Survived ! and why should they not ?

Poul. But then their stamina must be prodigiously strong.

Flint. Stamina !

Poul. Let us see, Button ! there was Dr. Dotage, that married the Devonshire girl ; he had a matter of——

Button. No, no ; he dropped off in six months.

Poul. True, true ; I had forgot.

Flint. Lord have mercy !

Button. Indeed, an old master of mine, Sir Harry O'Tuff, is alive, and walks about to this day.

Flint. Hey !

Poul. But you forget where Sir Harry was born, and how soon his lady eloped.

Button. In the honey-moon ; with Captain Pike, of the guards : I mind it full well.

Poul. That, indeed, alters the case.

Flint. Well, but, Billy, you are not serious in this ? you don't think there is any danger of death ?

Button. As to the matter of death, the Doctor knows better than I, because why, that lies in his way : But I shall never forget Colonel Crazy, one of the best customers that ever I had ;

had ; I never think of him without dropping a tear.

Flint. Why ? what was the matter with him ?

Button. Married Lady Barbary Bonnie, as it might be about midnight on Monday——

Flint. Well !

Button. But never more saw the sweet face of the fun.

Flint. What ! did he die ?

Button. Within an hour after throwing the stocking.

Flint. Good Lord ! that was dreadful indeed ! Of what age might he be ?

Button. About your time of life.

Flint. That is vastly alarming. Lord blefs me, Bill, I am all of a tremble !

Button. Ay, truly, it behoves your honour to confider what you are about.

Flint. True.

Button. Then, what a world of money must go ! running forwards and backwards to town, and jaunting to see all the fine fights in the place——

Flint. I sha'n't take her to many of them : perhaps I may shew her the Parliament-house, the plays, and Boodles, and Bedlam, and my Lord-Mayor, and the lions.

Button. And then the vast heap of fine cloaths you must make——

Flint. What occasion for that ?

Button. As you ar'n't known, there is no doing without ; because why, every body passes there for what they appears.

Flint. Right, Billy ; but I believe I have found out a way to do that pretty cheap.

Button. Which way may be that ?

Flint.

Flint. You have seen the minister that's come down to tack us together——

Button. I have: Is he a fine man in the pulpit?

Flint. He don't care much to meddle with that; but he is a prodigious patriot, and a great politician to boot.

Button. Indeed?

Flint. And he has left behind him, at Paris, a choice collection of curious rich cloaths, which he has promised to sell me a pennorth.

Poul. Pho! what Billy talks of are trifles to the evils you are to expect: To have a young girl break in upon all your old ways; your afternoon's nap interrupted, and perhaps not suffered to take your pipe of a night——

Flint. No?

Poul. All your former friends forbidden your house——

Flint. The fewer comes in, the less will go out: I sha'n't be very sorry for that.

Poul. To make room for her own numerous clan——

Flint. Not a soul of them shall enter the doors.

Poul. A brood of babes at your board, whose fathers she herself won't find it easy to name——

Flint. To prevent that, I'll lock her up in a room.

Poul. The King's-Bench will break open the door.

Flint. Then I'll turn her out of the house.

Poul. Then her debts will throw you into a gaol.

Flint. Who told you so?

Poul. A dozen of proctors.

Flint.

Flint. Then I will hang myself out of the way.

Poul. So she will become possessed of her jointure, and her creditors foreclose your estate.

Flint. What a miserable poor toad is a husband, whose misfortunes not even death can relieve!

Button. Think of that, 'Squire, before it be too late.

Flint. Well, but, friends, neighbours, what the deuce can I do? Are you all of a mind?

De Jar. All, all; dere is no question at all. What, a garçon of your antient famille, to take up with a pauvre petite bourgoise a?

Flint. Does that never happen in France?

De Jar. Never, but when Monsieur de Baron is very great beggar, and de bourgoise has damn'd deal de guinea.

Poul. That is none of our case.

Flint. No, no.—Mynheer, do your people never make up such matches?

Sour-Cr. Never, never; What! a German dishonour his stock! Why, Mester Flint, should Mistress Linnet bring you de children for de ten generations to come, they could not be chose de Canons de Stratsbourg.

Flint. No?

Poul. So, 'Squire, take it which way you will, what dreadful danger you run!

Flint. I do.

Poul. Loss of friends——

Button. Pipe and afternoon's nap——

Sour-Cr. Your famille gone to de dogs——

De Jar. Your peace of mind to de devil——

Poul. Your health——

Button. Your wealth——

Poul.

Poul. Plate, money, and manors——

All. Your——

Flint. Enough, dear neighbours, enough! I feel it, I feel it too well! Lord have mercy, what a miserable scrape am I in! And here too, not an hour ago, it cost me the Lord knows what in making her presents.

Poul. Never mind that; you had better part with half you are worth in the world.

Flint. True, true,—Well, then, I'll go and break off all matters this minute.

Poul. The wisest thing you can do.

Button. The sooner the better.

Flint. No doubt, no doubt in the—And yet, Button, she is a vast pretty girl: I should be heartily sorry to lose her. Dost think one could not get her on easier terms than on marriage?

Button. It is but trying, however.

Flint. To tell truth, Billy, I have always had that in my head; and, at all events, I have thought of a project that will answer my purpose.

Button. Ay, Squire! what is it?

Flint. No matter.—And, do you hear, Billy? should I get her consent, if you will take her off my hands, and marry her when I begin to grow tired, I'll settle ten pounds a-year upon you, for both your lives.

Button. Without paying the taxes?

Flint. That matter we will talk of hereafter.

[Exit.

Poul. So, so! we have settled this business, however.

Button. No more thoughts of his taking a wife.

Poul.

Poul. He would sooner be tied to a gibbet. But, Billy, step after him (they will let you in at Sir Christopher Cripple's) and bring us, Bill, a faithful account.

Button. I will, I will. But where shall you be?

Poul. Above, in the Phoenix; we won't stir out of the house. But be very exact!

Button. Never fear. [*Exeunt.*

A Chamber.

Miss Linnet alone.

Miss Lin. Heigh-ho! what a sacrifice am I going to make! but it is the will of those who have a right to all my obedience; and to that I will submit.—[*Loud knocking at the door.*] Bless me! who can that be at this time of night?—Our friends may err; and projects, the most prudentially pointed, may miss of their aim: But age and experience demand respect and attention, and the undoubted kindness of our parents' designs claims, on our part, at least a grateful and ready compliance.

Enter Nancy.

Miss Lin. Nancy, who was that at the door?

Nancy. Mr. Flint, Miss, begs the favour of speaking five words to you.

Miss Lin. I was in hopes to have had this night at least to myself.—Where is my mother?

Nancy. In the next room, with Lady Catharine, consulting about your cloaths for the morning.

Miss Lin. He is here.—Very well; you may go. [*Exit Nancy.*

Enter

Enter Flint.

Flint. She is alone, as I wished.—Miss, I beg pardon for intruding at this time of night: But——

Miss Lin. Sir!

Flint. You can't wonder that I desire to enjoy your good company every minute I can.

Miss Lin. Those minutes a short space will place, Mr. Flint, in your power: If 'till then you had permitted me to——

Flint. Right. But to say truth, I wanted to have a little serious talk with you of how and about it. I think, Miss, you agree, if we marry, to go off to the country directly.

Miss Lin. If we marry? is it then a matter of doubt?

Flint. Why, I will tell you, Miss: With regard to myself, you know, I am one of the most antientest families in all the country round——

Miss Lin. Without doubt.

Flint. And as to money and lands, in these parts, I believe, few people can match me.

Miss Lin. Perhaps not.

Flint. And as to yourself, (I don't speak in a disparaging way) your friends are low folks, and your fortune just nothing at all.

Miss Lin. True, Sir: But this is no new discovery; you have known this——

Flint. Hear me out. Now as I bring all these good things on my side, and you have nothing to give me in return but your love, I ought to be pretty sure of the possession of that.

Miss Lin. I hope the properly discharging all the
the

the duties of that condition, which I am shortly to owe to your favour, will give you convincing proofs of my gratitude.

Flint. Your gratitude, Miss! but we talk of your love! and of that I must have plain and positive proofs.

Miss Lin. Proofs! of what kind?

Flint. To steal away directly with me to my lodgings——

Miss Lin. Your lodgings!

Flint. There pass the night; and in the morning, the very minute we rise, we will march away to the Abbey.

Miss Lin. Sir!

Flint. In short, Miss, I must have this token of your love, or not a syllable more of the marriage.

Miss Lin. Give me patience!

Flint. Come, Miss! we have not a moment to lose; the coast is clear: Should somebody come, you will put it out of my power to do what I design.

Miss Lin. Power? Hands off, Mr. Flint! Power? I promise you, Sir, you shall never have me in your power!

Flint. Hear, Miss!

Miss Lin. Despicable wretch! From what part of my character could your vanity derive a hope that I would submit to your infamous purpose?

Flint. Don't be in a——

Miss Lin. To put principle out of the question, not a creature that had the least tincture of pride could fall a victim to such a contemptible——

Flint. Why, but, Miss——

Miss Lin.

Miss Lin. It is true, in compliance with the earnest request of my friends, I had consented to sacrifice my peace to their pleasure: and, though reluctant, would have given you my hand.

Flint. Vastly well!

Miss Lin. What motive, but obedience to them, could I have had in forming an union with you? Did you presume I was struck with your personal merit, or think the sordidness of your mind and manners would tempt me?

Flint. Really, Miss, this is carrying——

Miss Lin. You have wealth, I confess; but where could have been the advantage to me? As a reward for becoming your drudge, I might perhaps have received a scanty subsistence; for I could hardly suppose you would grant the free use of that to your wife, which your meanness had denied to yourself.

Flint. So, so, so! By and bye she will alarm the whole house!

Miss Lin. The whole house? the whole town shall be told! Sure, the greatest misfortune that Poverty brings in its train, is the subjecting us to the insults of wretches like this, who have no other merit than what their riches bestow on them.

Flint. What a damnable vixen!

Miss Lin. Go, Sir! leave the house! I am ashamed you have had the power to move me; and never more let me be shocked with your sight!

Enter Lady Catharine and Mrs. Linnet.

L. Cath. How's aw wi you within?—Gad's mercy, what's the mater wi Mefs? I well hope,
E Maister

Maister Flint, it is nae you wha ha set her a wailing.

Mrs Lin. Kitty, my love!

Miss Lin. A modest proposal of that gentleman's making——

L. Cath. Of what kind?

Miss Lin. Only this moment to quit my father and you, and take up my lodging with him.

L. Cath. To-night! aw that is quite out of the order of things; that is ne'er done, Maister Flint, till after the ceremony of the nuptials is said.

Flint. No? then, I can tell your ladyship, it will never be done.

L. Cath. How!

Enter Major Rackett, Sir Christopher Cripple, and Button.

Sir Chr. We beg pardon for taking the liberty to come in, Mrs. Linnet; but we were afraid some accident might have happened to Miss.

Mrs. Lin. There has, Sir.

Rack. Of what kind?

Mrs. Lin. That worthy gentleman, under pretence of friendship to us, and honourable views to my daughter, has hatched a treacherous design inevitably to ruin my child.

Sir Chr. What, he? Flint?

Mrs. Lin. Even he.

Sir Chr. An impudent son of a—Billy, lead me up, that I may take a peep at the puppy.—Your servant, young gentleman! what, is it true that we hear? A sweet swain this, to tempt a virgin to sin! Why, Old Nick has made a mistake here—he used to be more expert in his angling—
—for

—for what female on earth can be got to catch at this bait?

L. Cath. Haud, haud you, Sir Christopher Cripple! let Maister Flint and I have a short conference upon the occasion.—I find, Maister Flint, you ha made a little mistake; but marriage will set aw maters right i' the instant: I suppose you persevere to gang wi Mefs to kirk in the morning.

Flint. No, madam; nor the evening neither.

L. Cath. Mercy a Gad! what, do you refuse to ratify the preliminaries?

Flint. I don't say that neither.

Sir Chr. Then name the time in which you will fulfil them: A week?

L. Cath. A fortnight?

Mrs Lin. A month?

Flint. I won't be bound to no time.

Rack. A rascally evasion of his, to avoid an action at law.

Sir Chr. But, perhaps, he may be disappointed in that.

L. Cath. Well, but, Maister Flint, are you willing to make Mefs a pecuniary acknowledgment for the damage?

Flint. I have done her no damage, and I'll make no reparation.

Rack. Twelve honest men of your country may happen to differ in judgment.

Flint. Let her try, if she will.

Sir Chr. And I promise you she sha'n't be to seek for the means.

L. Cath. If you be nae afraid o' the laws, ha you nae sense o' shame?

Rack. He sense of shame?

L. Cath. Gad's wull, it sha' cum to the proof:

You mun ken, gued folk, at Edinbrugh, laist winter, I got acquainted with Maister Foote, the play-actor: I wull get him to bring the filthy loon on the stage——

Sir Chr. And expose him to the contempt of the world; he richly deserves it.

Flint. Ay, he may write, you may rail, and the people may hiss, and what care I? I have that at home that will keep up my spirits.

L. Cath. At hame?

Rack. The wretch means his money.

Flint. And what better friend can any man have? tell me the place where its influence fails? ask that gentleman how he got his cockade. Money! I know its worth, and therefore can't too carefully keep it: At this very instant I have a proof of its value; it enables me to laugh at that squeamish impertinent girl, and despise the weak efforts of your impotent malice: Call me forth to your courts when you please; that will procure me able defenders, and good witnesses too, if they are wanted. [Exit.

Sir Chr. Now there's a fellow that will never reform!

Rack. You had better let him alone; it is in vain to expect justice or honour from him: What a most contemptible cur is a miser!

Sir Chr. Ten thousand times worse than a highwayman: That poor devil only pilfers from Peter or Paul, and the money is scattered as soon as received; but the wretch that accumulates for the sake of secreting, annihilates what was intended for the use of the world, and is a robber of the whole human race.

Rack. And of himself into the bargain.

Button.

Button. For all the world like a magpie; he steals for the mere pleasure of hiding.

Rack. Well observed, little Bill.

Button. Why, he wanted to bring me into his plot: yes; he made proposals for me to marry Miss after his purpose was served——

Sir Chr. How!

Button. But he was out in his man! let him give his cast cloaths to his coachman; Billy Button can afford a new suit of his own.

Rack. I don't doubt it at all.

Button. Fellow! I am almost resolved never to set another stitch for him as long as I live.

Sir Chr. Right, Button, right. But where is Miss Kitty?—Come hither, my chicken! Faith, I am heartily glad you are rid of this scoundrel? and if such a crippled old fellow as I was worthy your notice—But, hold, Kate! there is another chap I must guard you against——

Miss Lin. Another, Sir! who?

Sir Chr. Why, this gentleman.

Rack. Me?

Sir Chr. Ay, you: Come, come, major, don't think you can impose upon a cunning old sportsman like me.

Rack. Upon my soul, Sir Christopher, you make me blush.

Sir Chr. Oh, you are devilish modest, I know! But to come to the trial at once. I have some reason to believe, major, you are fond of this girl; and, that her want of fortune mayn't plead your excuse, I don't think I can better begin my plan of reforming than by a compliment paid to her virtue: Then, take her, and with her two thousand guineas in hand.

Mrs Lin. How, Sir!

Sir Chr.

Sir Chr. And expect another good spell, when Monsieur le Fevre sets me free from the gout.

Button. Please your worship, I'll accept her with half.—

L Cath. Gi me leave, Sir Christopher, to throw in the wedow's mite on the happy occasion: The bride's garment, and her dinner, shall be furnished by me.

Sir Chr. Cock-a-leeky soup!

L. Cath. Sheep's head singed, and haggies in plenty.

Sir Chr. Well said, Lady Catharine,

Miss Lin. How, Sir, shall I acknowledge this goodness?

Sir Chr. By saying nothing about it.—Well, Sir! we wait your answer.

Rack. I think the lady might first be consulted: I should be sorry a fresh prosecution should follow so fast on the heels of the——

Sir Chr. Come, come, no trifling! your resolution at once.

Rack. I receive, then, your offer with pleasure.

Sir Chr. Miss!

Miss Lin. Sir, there is a little account to be first settled between this gentleman and an old unhappy acquaintance of mine.

Sir Chr. Who?

Miss Lin. The major can guess—the unhappy Miss Prim.

Sir Chr. You see, major, your old sins are rising in judgment.

Rack. I believe, madam, I can satisfy that.

Miss Lin. I sha'n't give you the trouble.—But first, let me return you all my most grateful thanks for your kind intentions towards me: I
know

know your generous motives, and feel their value, I hope, as I ought; but might I be permitted to chuse, I beg to remain in the station I am: My little talents have hitherto received the publick protection, nor, whilst I continue to deserve, am I the least afraid of losing, my patrons.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE

E P I L O G U E.

Written by R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

Spoken by Mrs. JEWELL.

CONFIDING in the justice of the place,
To you *The Maid of Bath* submits her case :
Wronged, and defeated of three several spouses,
She lays her damages for nine full houses.
Well, Sirs, you've heard the parties, *pro* and *con*.
Do the *pro's* carry it? shall the suit go on?
Speak hearts for us! to them we make appeal:
Tell us not what you think, but what you feel:
Ask us, Why bring a private cause to view?
We answer with a sigh—because 'tis true:
For tho' invention is our Poet's trade,
Here he but copies parts which others played.
For on a ramble, late one starry night,
With Asmodeo, his familiar sprite,
High on the wing, by his conductor's side,
This guilty scene the indignant Bard descried;
Soaring in air, his ready pen he drew,
And dash'd the glowing satire as he flew:
For in these rank luxuriant times, there needs
Some strong bold hand to pluck the noxious weeds.
The rake of sixty, crippled hand and knee,
Who sins on claret, and repents on tea;
The witless macaroni, who purloins
A few cant words, which some pert gambler coins;
The undomestick Amazonian dame,
Staunch to her *coterie*, in despite of Fame;
These are the victims of our Poet's plan:
But most, that *monster*—an unfeeling man.
When such a foe provokes him to the fight,
Tho' maim'd, out sallies the puissant knight;
Like Withrington, maintains the glorious strife,
And only yields his laurels—with his life.

